

THE
ANTI-SLAVERY ENTERPRISE:

ITS
NECESSITY, PRACTICABILITY, AND DIGNITY,
WITH GLIMPSES AT THE
SPECIAL DUTIES OF THE NORTH.

AN
ADDRESS
BEFORE
THE PEOPLE OF NEW YORK,
AT THE
METROPOLITAN THEATRE, MAY 9, 1855.

BY
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ADDRESS.

MR. PRESIDENT AND FELLOW-CITIZENS OF NEW YORK.

HISTORY abounds in vicissitudes. From weakness and humility, men ascend to power and place. From defeat and disparagement, enterprises are lifted to triumph and acceptance. The martyr of to-day is gratefully enshrined on the morrow. The stone that the builders rejected is made the head of the corner. Thus it always has been, and ever will be.

Only twenty years ago,—in 1835,—the friends of the slave in our country were weak and humble, while their great Enterprise, just then showing itself, was trampled down and despised. The small companies, gathered together in the name of Freedom, were interrupted and often dispersed by riotous mobs. At Boston, a feeble association of women, called the Female Anti-Slavery Society, convened in a small room of an upper story in an obscure building, was insulted and then driven out of doors by a frantic crowd, politely termed at the time, an assemblage of “gentlemen of property and standing,” which, after various deeds of violence and vileness, next directed itself upon William Lloyd Garrison,—known as the determined editor of the *Liberator*, and the originator of the Anti-Slavery Enterprise in our day,—then ruthlessly tearing him away, amidst savage threats and with a halter about his neck, dragged him through the streets, until, at last, guilty only of loving liberty, if not wisely, too well,

this unoffending citizen was thrust into the common jail for protection against an infuriate populace. Nor was Boston alone. Even villages in remote rural solitude, belched forth in similar outrage; while the large towns, like Providence, New Haven, Utica, Worcester, Alton, Cincinnati, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York, became so many fiery craters, overflowing with rage and madness. What lawless violence failed to accomplish was next urged through the forms of law. By solemn legislative acts, the Slave States called on the Free States "promptly and effectually to suppress all associations within their respective limits purporting to be Abolition Societies;" and Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and New York, basely hearkened to the base proposition. The press, too, with untold power, exerted itself in this behalf, while the pulpit, the politician, and the merchant, conspired to stifle discussion, until the voice of Freedom was hushed to a whisper, "alas! almost afraid to know itself."

Since then—in the lapse of a few years only—a change has taken place. Instead of those small companies, counted by tens, we have now this mighty assembly, counted by thousands; instead of an insignificant apartment, like that in Boston, the mere appendage of a printing-office, where, as in the manger itself, Truth was cradled, we have now this Metropolitan Hall, ample in proportions and central in place; instead of a profane and clamorous mob, beating at our gates, dispersing our assembly, and making one of our number the victim of its fury, we have now peace and harmony at unguarded doors, ruffled only by a generous competition to participate in this occasion; while legislatures openly declare their sympathies; villages, towns and cities vie in the new manifestation; and the press itself, with increased power, heralds, applauds and extends the prevailing influence, which, overflowing from every fountain, and pouring through every channel, at last, by the awakened voice of pulpit, politician and merchant, swells into an irrepressible cry.

Here is a great change, worthy of notice and memory, for it attests the first stage of victory. Slavery, in all its many-sided wrongs, still continues; but here in this metropolis,—ay, Sir, and throughout the whole North,—freedom of discus-

sion is at length secured. And this, I say, is the first stage of victory — herald of the transcendent Future;

“Hark ! a glad voice the lonely desert cheers ;
 Prepare the way ! a God, a God appears !
 A God ! a God ! the vocal hills reply,
 The rocks proclaim th’ approaching Deity.”

Nor is there any thing peculiar in the trials to which our cause has been exposed. Thus in all ages has Truth been encountered. At first persecuted, gagged, silenced, crucified, she has cried out from the prison, from the torture, from the stake, from the cross, until at last her voice has been heard. And when that voice is really heard, whether in martyr cries, or in the earthquake tones of civil convulsion, or in the calmness of ordinary speech, such as I now employ, or in that still small utterance inaudible to the common ear, then is the beginning of victory! “Give me where to stand, and I will move the world,” said Archimedes; and Truth asks no more than did the master of geometry.

Viewed in this aspect, the present occasion rises above any ordinary course of lectures or series of political meetings. It is the inauguration of Freedom. From this time forward, her voice of warning and command cannot be silenced. The sensitive sympathies of property may, in this commercial mart, once again recognize property in man; the watchful press itself may falter or fail, but the vantage-ground of free discussion now achieved cannot be lost. On this I take my stand, and, as from the Mount of Vision, behold the whole field of our great controversy spread before me. There is no point, topic, fact, matter, reason or argument, touching the question between Slavery and Freedom, which is not now open. Of all these I might, perhaps, aptly select some one and confine myself to its development. But I should not, in this way, best satisfy the seeming requirements of the occasion. According to the invitation of your Committee, I was to make an address, introductory to the present course of lectures, but was prevented by ill-health. And now, at the close of the course, I am to say what I failed to say at its beginning. Not as caucus or as Congress can I address you; nor am I moved to undertake a political harangue or constitutional argument. Out

of the occasion let me speak, and, discarding any individual topic, aim to exhibit the entire field, in all its divisions and subdivisions, with all its metes and bounds.

My subject will be THE NECESSITY, PRACTICABILITY AND DIGNITY OF THE ANTI-SLAVERY ENTERPRISE, WITH GLIMPSES AT THE SPECIAL DUTIES OF THE NORTH. By this Enterprise I do not mean the efforts of any restricted circle, sect or party, but the cause of the slave, in all its forms and degrees, and under all its names, — whether inspired by the pulpit, the press, the economist or the politician, — whether in the early, persistent and comprehensive demands of Garrison, the gentler utterances of Channing, or the strictly constitutional endeavors of others now actually sharing the public councils of the country. To carry through this review, under its different heads, I shall not hesitate to meet the objections which have been urged against it, so far, at least, as I am aware of them. And now, as I address you seriously, I venture to ask your serious attention even to the end. Not easily can a public address reach that highest completeness which is found in mingling the useful and the agreeable; but I desire to say, that, in this arrangement and co-ordination of my remarks to-night, I seek to cultivate that highest courtesy of a speaker, which is found in clearness.

I. I begin with the NECESSITY of the Anti-Slavery Enterprise. In the wrong of Slavery, *as defined by existing law*, this necessity is plainly apparent; nor can any man within the sound of my voice, who listens to the authentic words of the law, hesitate in my conclusion. A wrong so grievous and unquestionable should not be allowed to continue. For the honor of human nature, and for the good of all concerned, *it should at once cease to exist*. On this simple statement, as a corner-stone, I found the necessity of the Anti-Slavery Enterprise.

I do not dwell, Sir, on the many tales which come from the house of bondage; on the bitter sorrows there undergone; on the flesh, galled by the manacle or spiriting blood beneath the lash; on the human form mutilated by the knife, or seared by

red-hot iron ; on the ferocious scent of blood-hounds in chase of human prey ; on the sale of fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, little children — even infants — at the auction-block ; on the practical prostration of all rights, all ties, and even all hope ; on the deadly injury to morals, substituting concubinage for marriage, and changing the whole land of slavery into a by-word of shame, only fitly pictured by the language of Dante when he called his own degraded country a House of Ill Fame ; and, last of all, on the pernicious influence upon the master as well as the slave, showing itself too often, even by his own confession, in rudeness of manners and character, and especially in that blindness which renders him insensible to the wrong he upholds, while he,

“ — so perfect is his misery,
Not once perceives his foul disfigurement,
But boasts himself more comely than before.”

On these things I do not dwell, although volumes are at hand of unquestionable facts and of illustrative story, so just and happy as to vie with fact, out of which I might draw, until, like Macbeth, you had supped full of horrors.

But all these I put aside ; not because I do not regard them of moment in exhibiting the true character of slavery, but because I desire to present this argument on grounds above all controversy, impeachment, or suspicion, even from slave-masters themselves. Not on triumphant story, not even on indisputable facts, do I now accuse Slavery, but on its character, as revealed in its own simple definition of itself. Out of its own mouth do I condemn it. By the *law of Slavery*, man, created in the image of God, is divested of his human character, and declared to be a mere chattel. That this statement may not seem to be put forward without precise authority, I quote the law of two different States. The civil code of Louisiana thus defines a slave : —

“ A slave is one who is in the power of a master to whom he belongs. The master may sell him, dispose of his person, his industry, and his labor. He can do nothing, possess nothing, nor acquire any thing but what must belong to his master.” — *Civil Code*, Art. 35.

The law of another polished slave State gives this definition ;

"Slaves shall be deemed, sold, taken, reputed and adjudged in law to be *chattels personal*, in the hands of their owners, and possessors, and their executors, administrators and assignees, to all intents, constructions and purposes whatsoever."—2 *Brev. Dig.* 229.

And a careful writer, Judge Stroud, in a work of juridical as well as philanthropic merit, thus sums up the law :

"The cardinal principle of Slavery—that the slave is not to be ranked among *sentient* beings, but among *things*—is an article of property—a chattel personal—obtains as undoubted law in all of these (the slave) States."—*Stroud's Laws of Slavery*, 22.

Sir, this is enough. As out of its small egg crawls forth the slimy, scaly reptile crocodile, so out of this simple definition crawls forth the whole slimy, scaly reptile monstrosity, by which a man is changed into a chattel,—a person is converted into a thing,—a soul is transmuted into merchandise. According to this very definition, the slave is held simply for the good of his master, to whose behests, his life, liberty and happiness are devoted, and by whom he may be bartered, leased, mortgaged, bequeathed, invoiced, shipped as cargo, stored as goods, sold on execution, knocked off at public auction, and even staked at the gaming-table on the hazard of a card or die. The slave may seem to have a wife; but he has not; for his wife belongs to his master. He may seem to have a child; but he has not; for his child belongs to his master. He may be filled with the desire of knowledge, opening to him the gates of hope on earth and in heaven; but the master may impiously close this sacred pursuit. Thus is he robbed not merely of privileges, but of himself; not merely of money and labor, but of wife and children; not merely of time and opportunity, but of every assurance of happiness; not merely of earthly hope, but of all those divine aspirations that spring from the fountain of light. He is not merely restrained in liberty, but totally deprived of it; not merely curtailed in rights, but absolutely stripped of them; not merely loaded with burthens, but changed into a beast of burthen; not merely bent in countenance to the earth, but sunk to the legal level of a quadruped; not merely exposed to personal cruelty, but deprived of his character as a person; not merely compelled to involuntary labor, but degraded to be a rude thing; not merely shut out from knowledge, but wrest-

ed from his place in the human family. *And all this, Sir, is according to the simple law of Slavery.*

Not is even this all. The law, by cumulative provisions, positively forbids that a slave shall be taught to read. Hear this, fellow citizens, and confess, that no barbarism of despotism, no extravagance of tyranny, no excess of impiety can be more blasphemous or deadly. "Train up the child in the way he should go," is the lesson of sacred wisdom; but the law of slavery boldly prohibits any such training, and dooms the child to hopeless ignorance and degradation. "Let there be light," was the Divine utterance at the very dawn of creation,—and this commandment, travelling with the ages and the hours, still speaks with the voice of God; but the law of Slavery says, "Let there be darkness."

But it is earnestly averred that slave-masters are humane, and that slaves are treated with kindness. These averments, however, I properly put aside, precisely as I have already put aside the multitudinous illustrations from the cruelty of Slavery. On the simple letter of the law I take my stand, and do not go beyond what is there nominated. The masses of men are not better than their laws, and, whatever may be the eminence of individual virtue, it is not reasonable to infer that the masses of slave-masters are better than the law of Slavery. And, since this law submits the slave to their irresponsible control, with power to bind and to scourge—to shut the soul from knowledge—to separate families—to unclasp the infant from a mother's breast, and the wife from a husband's arms,—it is natural to conclude that such enormities are sanctioned by them, while the brutal prohibition of instruction by supplementary law gives crowning evidence of their complete complicity. And this conclusion must exist unquestioned, just so long as the law exists unrepealed. Cease, then, to blazon the humanity of slave-masters. Tell me not of the lenity with which this cruel law is tempered to its unhappy subjects. Tell me not of the sympathy which overflows from the mansion of the master to the cabin of the slave. In vain you assert these instances. In vain you show that there are individuals who do not exert the wickedness of the law. The law still endures. The institution of Slavery, which it defines

and upholds, continues to outrage Public Opinion, and, within the limits of our Republic, upwards of three millions of human beings, guilty only of a skin not colored like your own, are left the victims of its unrighteous, irresponsible power.

Power divorced from right is devilish ; power without the check of responsibility is tyrannical ; and I need not go back to the authority of Plato, when I assert, that the most complete injustice is that which is erected into the form of law. But all these things concur in Slavery. It is, then, on the testimony of slave-masters, solemnly, legislatively, judicially attested in the very law itself, that I now arraign this institution, as an outrage upon man and his Creator. And here is the necessity of the Anti-Slavery Enterprise. A wrong so transcendent, so loathsome, so direful, must be encountered *wherever it can be reached*, and the battle must be continued without truce or compromise, until the field is entirely won. Freedom and Slavery can hold no divided empire ; nor can there be any true repose until Freedom is every where established.

To the necessity of the Anti-Slavery Enterprise, there are two and only two vital objections ; one founded on the alleged distinction of race, and the other on the alleged sanction of Christianity. All other objections are of an inferior character, or are directed logically at its practicability. Of these two leading objections, let me briefly speak.

1. And, first, of the alleged *distinction of race*. This objection itself assumes two different forms, one founded on a prophetic malediction in the Old Testament, and the other on the professed observations of recent science. Its importance is apparent in the obvious fact, that, unless such distinction be clearly and unmistakably established, every argument by which our own freedom is vindicated,—every applause awarded to the successful rebellion of our fathers,—every indignant word ever hurled against the enslavement of our white fellow-citizens by Algerine corsairs, must plead trumpet-tongued against the deep damnation of Slavery, whether white or black.

It is said that the Africans are the posterity of Ham, the son of Noah, through Canaan, who was cursed by Noah, to be the servant of his brethren, and that this malediction has fallen

upon all his descendants, including the unhappy Africans,—who are accordingly devoted by God, through unending generations, to unending bondage. Such is the favorite argument often put forth at the South, and more than once directly addressed to myself. Here, for instance, is a passage from a letter recently received; “You need not persist,” says the writer, “in confounding Japheth’s children with Ham’s, and making both races one, and arguing on their rights as those of man broadly.” And I have been seriously assured that until this objection is answered, it will be in vain to press my views upon Congress or the country. Listen now to the texts of the Old Testament which are so strangely employed ;

“And he [Noah] said, cursed be Canaan ; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem ; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant.”—*Genesis*, chap. ix. 25–27.

That is all ; and I need only read these words in order to expose the whole transpicious humbug. But I am tempted to add, that, to justify this objection, it will be necessary to maintain at least five different propositions, as essential links in the chain of the African slave ; *first*, that, by this malediction, Canaan himself was actually changed into a chattel, whereas, he is simply made the servant of his brethren ; *secondly*, that not merely Canaan, but all his posterity, to the remotest generation, was so changed, whereas the language has no such extent ; *thirdly*, that the African actually belongs to the posterity of Canaan,—an ethnographical assumption absurdly difficult to establish ; *fourthly*, that each of the descendants of Shem or Japheth has a right to hold an African fellow-man as a chattel,—a proposition which finds no semblance of support ; and, *fifthly*, that every slave-master is truly descended from Shem or Japheth,—a pedigree which no anxiety or audacity can prove ! This plain analysis, which may fitly excite a smile, shows the five-fold absurdity of an attempt to found this revolting wrong on

“Any successive title, long and dark,
Drawn from the musty rolls of Noah’s ark.”

The small bigotry, which could find comfort in these texts, has been lately exalted by the suggestion of science, that the

different races of men are not derived from a single pair, but from several distinct stocks, according to their several distinct characteristics; and it has been audaciously argued that the African is so far inferior, as to lose all title to that liberty which is the birthright of the lordly white. Now I have neither time nor disposition on this occasion, to discuss the question of the unity of the races; nor is it necessary to my present purpose. It may be that the different races of men proceeded from different stocks; but there is but *one* great Human Family, in which Caucasian and African, Chinese and Indian, are all brothers, children of *one* Father, and heirs to *one* happiness,—alike on earth and in heaven. “Star-eyed science” cannot shake this everlasting truth. It may vainly exhibit peculiarities in the African, by which he is distinguishable from the Caucasian. It may, in his physical form and intellectual character, presume to find the stamp of permanent inferiority. But by no reach of learning, by no torture of fact, by no effrontery of dogma, can it show that he is not *a man*. And as a man he stands before you an unquestionable member of the Human Family, and entitled to *all the rights of man*. You can claim nothing for yourself, *as man*, which you must not accord to him. *Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness*,—which you proudly declare to be your own inalienable, God-given rights, and to the support of which your fathers pledged their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor, are his by the same immortal title that they are yours.

2. From the objection founded on the alleged distinction of race, I pass to that other founded on the alleged *sanction of Slavery by Christianity*. And, striving to be brief, I shall not undertake to reconcile texts often quoted from the Old Testament, which, whatever may be their import, are all absorbed in the New; nor shall I stop to consider the precise interpretation of the oft-quoted phrase, *Servants, obey your masters*; nor seek to weigh any such imperfect injunction in the scales against those grand commandments, on which hang all the law and the prophets. Surely, in the example and teachings of the Saviour, who lifted up the down-trodden, who enjoined purity of life, and overflowed with tenderness even to little children, human ingenuity can find no

apology for an institution which tramples on man, — which defiles woman, — and sweeps little children beneath the hammer of the auctioneer. If to any one these things seem to have the license of Christianity, it is only because they have first secured a license in his own soul. Men are prone to find in uncertain, disconnected texts, a confirmation of their own personal prejudices or prepossessions. And I—who am no divine, but only a simple layman—make bold to say, that whoever finds in the Gospel any sanction of Slavery, finds there merely a reflection of himself. On a matter so irresistibly clear, authority is superfluous; but an eminent character, who as poet makes us forget his high place as philosopher, and as philosopher, makes us forget his high place as theologian, has exposed the essential antagonism between Christianity and Slavery, in a few pregnant words which you will be glad to hear,—particularly as, I believe, they have not been before introduced into this discussion. “By a principle essential to Christianity,” says Coleridge, “a *person* is eternally differenced from a *thing*; so that the idea of a *Human Being* necessarily excludes the idea of property in that *Being*.”

With regret, though not with astonishment, I learn that a Boston divine has sought to throw the seamless garment of Christ over this shocking wrong. But I am patient, and see clearly how vain will be his effort, when I call to mind, that, within this very century, other divines sought to throw the same seamless garment over the more shocking slave-trade; and that, among many publications, a little book, was then put forth with the name of a reverend clergyman on the title-page, to prove that “the African trade for negro slaves is consistent with the principles of humanity and revealed religion;” and, thinking of these things, I am ready to say with Shakspeare,

“ ——— In religion,
What damned error, but some sober brow
Will bless it and approve it with a text? ”

In the support of Slavery, it is the habit to pervert texts and to invent authority. Even St. Paul is vouched for a wrong which his Christian life rebukes. Great stress is now laid on his example, as it appears in the epistle to Philemon, written at

Rome, and sent by Onesimus, a servant. From the single chapter constituting the entire epistle, I take the following passage, in ten verses, which is strangely invoked for Slavery ;

" I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds ; which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me ; whom I have sent again ; thou, therefore, receive him, that is, mine own bowels ; whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel ; but without thy mind would I do nothing, that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly. For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever ; not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord ? If thou count me, therefore a partner, receive him as myself. If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account. I, Paul, have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it ; albeit, I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides." — Epistle to Philemon, verses 10 – 19.

Out of this affectionate epistle, in which St. Paul calls the converted servant, Onesimus, his *son*, precisely as in another epistle he calls Timothy his son, Slavery has been elaborately vindicated, and the great Apostle to the Gentiles has been made the very tutelary saint of the Slave Hunter. Now, without relying on minute criticism, to infer his real judgment of Slavery from his condemnation on another occasion of "men-stealers," or, according to the original text, *slave-traders*, in company with "murderers of fathers, and murderers of mothers," and without undertaking to show that the present epistle, when truly interpreted, is a protest against Slavery, and a voice for Freedom, — all of which might be done, — I content myself by calling attention to two things, apparent on its face, and in themselves an all-sufficient response. First, while it appears that Onesimus had been in some way the servant of Philemon, it does not appear that he had ever been held as a slave, much less as a chattel ; and how gross and monstrous is the effort to derive a wrong, by which man is changed to a chattel, out of words, whether in the Constitution of our country, or in the Bible, which do not explicitly, unequivocally, and exclusively define this wrong ! Secondly, in charging Onesimus with this epistle to Philemon, the Apostle announces him as "not now a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved," and he enjoins upon his correspondent the hospitality due only to a

freeman, saying expressly, "If thou count me, therefore, a partner, *receive him as myself*;" ay, Sir, not as slave, not even as servant, but as a brother beloved, even as the Apostle himself. Thus with apostolic pen wrote Paul to his disciple, Philemon. Beyond all doubt, in these words of gentleness, benediction, and emancipation, dropping with celestial, soul-awakening power, there can be no justification for a conspiracy, which, beginning with the treachery of Iscariot, and the temptation of pieces of silver, seeks, by fraud, brutality, and violence, through officers of the law armed to the teeth, like pirates, and amidst soldiers who degrade their uniform, to hurl a fellow-man back into the lash-resounding den of American Slavery; and if any one can thus pervert this beneficent example, allow me to say, that he gives too much occasion to doubt his intelligence or his sincerity.

Certainly I am right in thus stripping from Slavery the apology of Christianity, which it has tenaciously hugged; and here I leave the first part of my subject, assuming against every objection the Necessity of our Enterprise.

II. I am now brought, in the *second* place, to consider the PRACTICABILITY of the Enterprise. And here the way is easy. In showing its necessity, I have already demonstrated its practicability; for the former includes the latter, as the greater includes the less. Whatever is necessary must be practicable. By a decree which has ever been a by-word of tyranny, the Israelites were compelled to make bricks without straw; but it is not according to the ways of a benevolent Providence, that man should be constrained to do what cannot be done. What must be done can be done. Besides, the Anti-Slavery Enterprise is necessary because it is right; and the right is always practicable.

I know well the little faith which the world has in the triumph of principles, and I readily imagine the despair with which our object is regarded; but not on this account am I disheartened. That exuberant writer, Sir Thomas Browne, breaks into an ecstatic wish for some new difficulty in Christian belief, that his faith might have a new victory, and an eminent enthusiast went so far as to say, that he believed be-

cause it was impossible — *credo quia impossibile*. But no such exalted faith is now required. Here is no impossibility, nor is there any difficulty which will not yield to a faithful, well-directed endeavor. If to any timid soul the Enterprise seems impossible because it is too beautiful, then I say at once that it is too beautiful not to be possible.

But descending from these summits, let me show plainly the object which it seeks to accomplish, and herein you shall see and confess its complete practicability. While discountenancing all prejudice of color and every establishment of caste, the Anti-Slavery Enterprise—at least so far as I may speak for it—does not undertake to change human nature, or to force any individual into relations of life for which he is not morally, intellectually, and socially adapted; nor does it necessarily assume that a race, degraded for long generations under the iron heel of bondage, can be lifted at once into all the political privileges of an American citizen. But, Sir, it does confidently assume, against all question, contradiction, or assault whatever, *that every man is entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; and, with equal confidence, it asserts that every individual, who wears the human form, whether black or white, should at once be recognized as man*. I know not when this is done, what other trials may be in wait for the unhappy African; but I do know, that the Anti-Slavery Enterprise will then have triumphed, and the institution of Slavery, *as defined by existing law*, will no longer shock mankind.

In this work the first essential practical requisite is, that the question shall be openly and frankly confronted. Do not put it aside. Do not blink it out of sight. Do not dodge it. Approach it. Study it. Ponder it. Deal with it. Let it rest in the illumination of speech, conversation, and the press. Let it fill the thoughts of the statesman and the prayers of the pulpit. When Slavery is thus regarded, its true character will be recognized *as a hateful assemblage of unquestionable wrongs under the sanction of existing law*, and good men will be moved at once to apply the remedy. Already even its zealots admit that its “abuses” should be removed. This is their word and not mine. Alas! alas! Sir, it is these very “abuses” which constitute its component parts, without which it would

not exist, even as the scourges in a bundle with the axe constituted the dread fasces of the Roman lictor. Take away these, and the whole embodied outrage will disappear. Surely that central assumption — more deadly than the axe itself — by which man is changed into a chattel, may be abandoned; and is not this practicable? The associate scourges by which that transcendent “abuse” is surrounded, may, one by one, be subtracted. The “abuse” which substitutes concubinage for marriage — the “abuse” which annuls the parental relation — the “abuse” which closes the portals of knowledge — the “abuse” which tyrannically usurps all the labor of another — now upheld by positive law, may by positive law be abolished. To say that this is not practicable, in the nineteenth century, would be a scandal upon mankind. And just in proportion as these “abuses” cease to have the sanction of law, will the institution of Slavery cease to exist. The African, whatever may then be his condition, will no longer be *the slave* over whose wrongs and sorrows the world throbs at times fiercely indignant, and at times painfully sad, while with outstretched arms, he sends forth the piteous cry, “Am I not a man and a brother?”

In pressing forward to this result, the inquiry is often presented, to what extent, if any, shall compensation be allowed to the slave-masters? Clearly, if the point be determined by *absolute justice*, not the masters but the slaves will be entitled to compensation; for it is the slaves, who, throughout weary generations, have been deprived of their toil, and all its fruits which went to enrich their masters. Besides, it seems hardly reasonable to pay for the relinquishment of those disgusting “abuses,” which, in their aggregation, constitute the bundle of Slavery. Pray, Sir, by what tariff, price current, or principle of equation, shall their several values be estimated? What sum shall be counted out as the proper price for the abandonment of that pretension — more indecent than the *jus primæ noctis* of the feudal age — which leaves woman, whether in the arms of master or slave, always a concubine? What bribe shall be proffered for the restoration of God-given parental rights? What money shall be paid for taking off the padlock by which souls are fastened down in darkness? How much for a quit-claim to labor

now meanly exacted by the strong from the weak? And what compensation shall be awarded for the surrender of that egregious assumption, condemned by reason and abhorred by piety, which changes a man into a thing? I put these questions without undertaking to pass upon them. Shrinking instinctively from any recognition of *rights founded on wrongs*, I find myself shrinking also from any austere verdict, which shall deny the means necessary to the great consummation we seek. Our fathers, under Washington, did not hesitate by Act of Congress, to appropriate largely for the ransom of white fellow-citizens enslaved by Algerine corsairs; and, following this example, I am disposed to consider the question of compensation as one of expediency, to be determined by the exigency of the hour and the constitutional powers of the Government; though such is my desire to see the foul fiend of Slavery in flight, that I could not hesitate to build even a bridge of gold, if necessary, to promote his escape.

The *Practicability* of the Anti-Slavery Enterprise has been constantly questioned, often so superficially, as to be answered at once. I shall not take time to consider the allegation, founded on considerations of economy, which audaciously assumes that Slave Labor is more advantageous than Free Labor—that Slavery is more profitable than Freedom; for this is all exploded by the official tables of the census; nor that other futile argument, that the slaves are not prepared for Freedom, and, therefore, should not be precipitated into this condition,—for that is no better than the ancient Greek folly, where the anxious mother would not allow her son to go into the water until he had first learned to swim. But as against the Necessity of the Anti-Slavery Enterprise, there were two chief objections, so, also, against its Practicability are there two: the first, founded on its alleged danger to the master, and the second, on its alleged damage to the slave himself.

1. The first objection, founded on the alleged *danger to the master*, most generally takes the extravagant form, that the slave, if released from his present condition, would cut his master's throat. Here is a blatant paradox, which can pass for reason only among those who have lost their reason. With

an absurdity which finds no parallel except in the defences of Slavery, it assumes that the African, when treated justly, will show a vindictiveness which he does not exhibit when treated unjustly; that when elevated by the blessings of Freedom, he will develop an appetite for blood which he never manifested when crushed by the curse of bondage. At present, the slave sees his wife ravished from his arms—sees his infant swept away to the auction block—sees the heavenly gate of knowledge shut upon him—sees his industry and all its fruits unjustly snatched by another—sees himself and offspring doomed to a servitude from which there is no redemption; and still his master sleeps secure. Will the master sleep less secure, when the slave no longer smarts under these revolting atrocities? I will not trifle with your intelligence, or with the quick-passing hour, by arguing this question.

But there is a lofty example, brightening the historic page, by which the seal of experience is affixed to the conclusions of reason; and you would hardly pardon me if I failed to adduce it. By virtue of a single Act of Parliament, the slaves of the British West Indies were changed at once to freedmen; and this great transition was accomplished absolutely without personal danger of any kind to the master. And yet the chance of danger there was greater far than among us. In our broad country, the slaves are overshadowed by a more than six-fold white population. Only in two States,—South Carolina and Mississippi,—do the slaves outnumber the whites, and there but slightly, while in the entire Slave States, the whites outnumber the slaves by many millions. But it was otherwise in the British West Indies, where the whites were overshadowed by a more than six-fold slave population. The slaves were 800,000, while the whites numbered only 131,000, distributed in different proportions on the different islands. And this disproportion has since increased rather than diminished, always without danger to the whites. In Jamaica, the largest of these possessions, there are now upwards of 400,000 Africans, and only 37,000 whites; in Barbadoes, the next largest possession, there are 120,000 Africans, and only 15,000 whites; in St. Lucia, 19,500 Africans, and only 600 whites; in Tobago, 14,000 Africans, and only 600 whites; in Montserrat, 6000

Africans, and only 150 whites; and in the Grenadines, upwards of 6000 Africans, and less than 50 whites. And yet in all these places, the authorities attest the good behavior of the Africans. Sir Lionel Smith, the Governor of Jamaica, in his speech to the Assembly, declared that their conduct "proves how well they deserved the boon of Freedom." Another Governor of another island dwells on the "peculiarly rare instances of the commission of grave or sanguinary crimes among the emancipated portion of these islands;" and the Queen of England, in a speech from the throne, has announced that the complete and final emancipation of the Africans had "taken place without any disturbance of public order and tranquillity." In this example I hail new confirmation of the rule that the highest safety is in doing right; and thus do I dismiss the objection founded on the alleged danger to the master.

2. And I am now brought to the second objection, founded on the alleged *damage to the slave*. It is common among the partisans of Slavery, to assert that our Enterprise has actually retarded the very cause it seeks to promote; and this paradoxical accusation, which might naturally show itself among the rank weeds of the South, is cherished here on our Northern soil, by those who anxiously look for any fig-leaf with which to cover their indifference or tergiversation.

This peculiar form of complaint is an old device, which has been instinctively employed on other occasions until it has ceased to be even plausible. Thus, throughout all times, has every good cause been encountered. The Saviour was nailed to the cross with a crown of thorns on his head, as a disturber of that peace on earth which he came to declare. The disciples, while preaching the Gospel of forgiveness and good will, were stoned as preachers of sedition and discord. The reformers, who sought to establish a higher piety and faith, were burnt at the stake as blasphemers and infidels. Patriots, in all ages, who have striven for their country's good, have been doomed to the scaffold or to exile, even as their country's enemies. And those brave Englishmen, who, at home, under the lead of Edmund Burke, even against their own country, espoused the cause of our fathers, shared the same illogical

impeachment which was touched to the quick by that orator statesman, when, after exposing its essential vice "in attributing the ill-effect of ill-judged conduct to the arguments used to dissuade us from it," he denounced it as "very absurd, but very common in modern practice, and very wicked." Ay, Sir, it is common in modern practice. In England, it has vainly renewed itself with special frequency against the Bible Societies; against the friends of education; against the patrons of vaccination; against the partisans of peace, all of whom have been openly arraigned as provoking and increasing the very evils, whether of infidelity, idleness, disease, or war, which they benignly sought to check. And to bring an instance which is precisely applicable to our own, Wilberforce, when conducting the Anti-Slavery Enterprise of England, first against the slave-trade and then against Slavery itself, was told that those efforts, by which his name is now consecrated forevermore, tended to increase the hardships of the slave, even to the extent of rivetting anew his chains. Such are the precedents for the imputation to which our Enterprise is exposed; and such, also, are the precedents by which I exhibit the fallacy of the imputation.

Sir, I do not doubt that the Enterprise has produced heat and irritation, amounting often to inflammation, among slave-masters, which, to superficial minds, may seem inconsistent with success; but which the careful observer will recognize at once as the natural and not unhealthy effort of a diseased body, to purge itself of existing impurities; and just in proportion to the malignity of the concealed poison, will be the extent of inflammation. A distemper like Slavery cannot be ejected like a splinter. It is, perhaps, too much to expect that men thus tortured should reason calmly—that patients thus suffering should comprehend the true nature of their case and kindly acknowledge the beneficent work; but not on this account can it be suspended.

In the face of this complaint, I assert that the Anti-Slavery Enterprise has already accomplished incalculable good. Even now it touches the national heart as it never before was touched, sweeping its strings with a might to draw forth emotions such as no political struggle has ever evoked. It

moves the young, the middle-aged, and the old. It enters the family circle, and mingles with the flame of the household hearth. It reaches the souls of mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters, filling all with a new aspiration for justice on earth, and awakening not merely a sentiment against Slavery, such as prevailed with our fathers, but a deep, undying conviction of its wrong, and a determination to leave no effort unattempted for its removal. With the sympathies of all Christendom as allies, it has already encompassed the slave-masters by a *moral blockade*, invisible to the eye, but more potent than navies, from which there can be no escape except in final capitulation. Thus it has created the irresistible influence which itself constitutes the beginning of success. Already there are signs of change. In common speech, as well as in writing, among slave-masters, the bondman is no longer called a *slave*, but a *servant*, — thus, by a soft substitution, concealing and condemning the true relation. Even newspapers in the land of bondage blush with indignation at the hunt of men by bloodhounds, thus protesting against an unquestionable incident of Slavery. Other signs are found in the added comfort of the slave; in the enlarged attention to his wants; in the experiments now beginning, by which the slave is enabled to share in the profits of his labor, and thus finally secure his freedom; and, above all, in the consciousness among slave-masters themselves, that they dwell now as never before under the keen observation of an ever-wakeful Public Opinion, quickened by an ever-wakeful Public Press. Nor is this all. Only lately propositions have been introduced into the legislatures of different States, and countenanced by governors, to mitigate the existing law of Slavery; and, almost while speaking, I have received the drafts of two different memorials, — one addressed to the legislature of Virginia, and the other to that of North Carolina, — asking for the slave three things, which it will be monstrous to refuse, but which, if conceded, will take from Slavery its existing character; — I mean, first, the protection of the marriage relation; secondly, the protection of the parental relation; and, thirdly, the privilege of knowledge. Grant these, and the girdled Upas tree soon must die. Sir, amidst these tokens of present success, and

the auguries of the future, I am not disturbed by any complaints of seeming damage. "Though it consume our own dwelling who does not venerate fire, without which human life can hardly exist on earth," says the Hindoo proverb; and the time is even now at hand when the Anti-Slavery Enterprise, which is the very fire of Freedom, with all its incidental excesses or excitements, will be hailed with a similar regard.

III. And now, in the *third* place, the Anti-Slavery Enterprise, which I have shown to be at once necessary and practicable, is commended by its inherent DIGNITY. Here the reasons are obvious and unanswerable.

Its object is benevolent; nor is there, in the dreary annals of the Past, a single enterprise which stands forth more clearly and indisputably entitled to this character. With unsurpassed and touching magnanimity, it seeks to benefit the lowly whom your eyes have not seen, and who are ignorant even of your labors, while it demands and receives a self-sacrifice calculated to ennoble an enterprise of even questionable merit. Its true rank is among works properly called *philanthropic* — the title of highest honor on earth. "I take goodness in this sense," says Lord Bacon in his Essays, "*the affecting of the weal of men*, which is what the Grecians call *Philanthropeia* — of all virtues and dignities of the mind the greatest, being the character of the Deity; and without it, man is a busy, mischievous, wretched thing, no better than a kind of vermin." Lord Bacon was right, and, perhaps, unconsciously followed a higher authority; for, when Moses asked the Lord to show unto him His glory, the Lord said, "I will make all my goodness to pass before thee." Ah! Sir, Peace has trophies fairer and more perennial than any snatched from fields of blood, but among all these, the fairest and most perennial are the trophies of beneficence. Scholarship, literature, jurisprudence, art, may wear their well-deserved honors; but an Enterprise of goodness deserves, and will yet receive, a higher palm than these.

In other aspects its dignity is apparent. It concerns the cause of Human Freedom, which, from the earliest days, has been the darling of history. By all the memories of the Past;

by the stories of childhood and the studies of youth; by every example of magnanimous virtue; by every aspiration for the good and true; by the fame of the martyrs swelling through all time; by the renown of patriots whose lives are landmarks of progress; by the praise lavished upon our fathers, you are summoned to this work. Unless Freedom be an illusion, and benevolence an error, you cannot resist the appeal. But our cause is nobler even than that of our fathers, inasmuch as it is more exalted to struggle for the Freedom of *others* than for our *own*.

Its practical importance at this moment gives to it an additional eminence. Whether measured by the number of beings it seeks to benefit; by the magnitude of the wrongs it hopes to relieve; by the difficulties with which it is beset; by the political relations which it affects; or by the ability and character it has enlisted, the cause of the slave now assumes proportions of grandeur which dwarf all other interests in our broad country. In its presence the machinations of politicians, the aspirations of office-seekers and the subterfuges of party, all sink below even their ordinary insignificance. For myself, Sir, I can see little else at this time among us which can tempt out on to the exposed steeps of public life an honest man, who wishes, by something that he does, to leave the world better than he found it. I can see little else which can afford any of those satisfactions which an honest man should covet. Nor is there any cause which so surely promises final success;

“ Oh ! a fair cause stands firm and will abide ;
Legions of angels fight upon its side ! ”

It is written that in the last days there shall be scoffers, and even this Enterprise, thus philanthropic, has not escaped their aspersions. And as the objections to its Necessity were two-fold, and the objections to its Practicability two-fold, so, also, are the aspersions two-fold;—first in the form of hard words, and secondly, by personal disparagement of those who are engaged in it.

1. The *hard words* are manifold as the passions and prejudices of men; but they generally end in the imputation of “ fanaticism.” In such a cause, I am willing to be called

“fanatic,” or what you will; I care not for aspersions, nor shall I shrink before hard words, either here or elsewhere. I have learned from that great Englishman, Oliver Cromwell, that no man can be trusted “who is afraid of a paper pellet;” and I am too familiar with history not to know, that every movement for reform, in Church or State, every endeavor for Human Liberty or Human Rights, has been thus assailed. I do not forget with what facility and frequency hard words have been employed — how that grandest character of many generations, the precursor of our own Washington, without whose example our Republic might have failed — the great William, Prince of Orange, the founder of the Dutch Republic, the United States of Holland — I do not forget how he was publicly branded as “a perjurer and a pest of society;” and, not to dwell on general instances, how the enterprise for the abolition of the slave-trade was characterized on the floor of Parliament by one eminent speaker, as “mischievous,” and by another as “visionary and delusive;” and how the exalted characters which it had enlisted were arraigned by still another eminent speaker — none other than that Tarleton, so conspicuous as the commander of the British horse in the southern campaigns of our Revolution, but more conspicuous in politics at home, — “as a junto of sectaries, sophists, enthusiasts, and fanatics;” and also were again arraigned by no less a person than a prince of the blood, the Duke of Clarence, afterwards William IV. of England, as “either fanatics or hypocrites,” in one of which classes he openly placed William Wilberforce. But impartial history, with immortal pen, has redressed these impassioned judgments; and the same impartial history will yet rejudge the impassioned judgments of this hour.

2. Hard words have been followed by *personal disparagement*, and the sneer is often launched that our Enterprise lacks the authority of names eminent in Church and State. If this be so, the more is the pity on their account; for our cause is needed to them more than they are needed to our cause. But alas! it is only according to the example of history that it should be so. It is not the eminent in Church and State, the rich and powerful, the favorites of fortune and of place, who most promptly welcome Truth, when she heralds change in

the existing order of things. It is others in poorer condition who throw open their hospitable hearts to the unattended stranger. Nay, more; it is not the dwellers amidst the glare of the world, but the humble and lowly, who most clearly discern new duties,—as the watchers, placed in the depths of a well, may observe the stars which are obscured to those who live in the effulgence of noon. Placed below the egotism and prejudice of self-interest, or of a class—below the cares and temptations of wealth or power—in the obscurity of common life, they discern the new signal, and surrender themselves unreservedly to its guidance. The Saviour knew this. He did not call upon the Priest, or Levite, or Pharisee, to follow him; but upon the humble fisherman by the sea of Galilee.

And now, Sir, I present to you the Anti-Slavery Enterprise vindicated in Necessity, Practicability, and Dignity, against all objections. If there be any objection which I have not answered, it is because I am not aware of its existence. It remains that I should give a practical conclusion to this whole matter, by showing, though in glimpses only, your SPECIAL DUTIES AS FREEMEN OF THE NORTH. And, thank God! at last there is a North.

Mr. President, it is not uncommon to hear persons among us at the North, confess the wrong of Slavery, and then, folding their hands in absolute listlessness, ejaculate, "What can we do about it?" Such men we encounter daily. You all know them. Among them are men in every department of human activity—who perpetually buy, build, and plan—who shrink from no labor—who are daunted by no peril of commercial adventure, by no hardihood of industrial enterprise—who, reaching in their undertakings across oceans and continents, would undertake "to put [a] girdle about the earth in forty seconds;" and yet, disheartened, they can join in no effort against Slavery. Others there are, especially among the youthful and enthusiastic, who vainly sigh because they were not born in the age of chivalry, or at least in the days of the revolution, not thinking that in this Enterprise, there is an opportunity of lofty endeavor such as no Paladin of chivalry,

or chief of the revolution enjoyed. Others there are, who freely bestow their means and time upon the distant inaccessible heathen of another hemisphere, in the islands of the sea; and yet they can do nothing to mitigate our grander heathenism here at home. While confessing that it ought to disappear from the earth, they forego, renounce, and abandon all exertion against it. Others there are still, (such is human inconsistency!) who plant the tree in whose full-grown shade they can never expect to sit—who hopefully drop the acorn in the earth, trusting that the oak which it sends upward to the skies will shelter their children beneath its shade; but they will do nothing to plant or nurture the great tree of Liberty, that it may cover with its arms unborn generations of men.

Others still there are, particularly in the large cities, who content themselves by occasional contributions to the redemption of a slave. To this object they give out of ample riches, and thus seek to silence the monitions of conscience. Now, I would not discountenance any form of activity by which Human Freedom, even in a single case, may be secured. But I desire to say, that such an act—too often accompanied by a pharisaical pretension, in strange contrast with the petty performance—cannot be considered an essential aid to the Anti-Slavery Enterprise. Not in this way can any impression be made on an evil so vast as Slavery—as you will clearly see by an illustration which I shall give. The god Thor, of Scandinavian mythology,—whose strength surpassed that of Hercules,—was once challenged to drain a simple cup dry. He applied it to his lips, and with superhuman capacity drank, but the water did not recede even from the rim, and at last the god abandoned the effort. The failure of even his extraordinary strength was explained, when he learned that the simple cup had communicated, by an invisible connection, with the whole vast ocean behind, out of which it was perpetually supplied, and which remained absolutely unaffected by the effort. And just so will these occasions of charity, though encountered by the largest private means, be constantly renewed, for they communicate with the whole vast Black Sea of Slavery behind, out of which they are perpetually supplied, and which remains absolutely unaffected by the

effort. Sir, private means may cope with individual necessities, but they are powerless to redress the evils of a wicked institution. Charity is limited and local; the evils of Slavery are infinite and every where. Besides, a wrong organized and upheld by law, can be removed only through a change of the law. Not, then, by an occasional contribution to ransom a slave can your duty be done in this great cause; but only by earnest, constant, valiant efforts against the institution—against the law—which makes slaves.

I am not insensible to the difficulties of this work. Full well I know the power of Slavery. Full well I know all its various intrenchments in the church, the politics and the prejudices of the country. Full well I know the sensitive interests of property, amounting to many hundred millions of dollars, which are said to be at stake. But these things can furnish no motive or apology for indifference, or for any folding of the hands. Surely the wrong is not less wrong because it is gigantic; the evil is not less evil because it is immeasurable; nor can the duty of perpetual warfare, with wrong, or evil, be in this instance suspended. Nay, because Slavery is powerful—because the Enterprise is difficult—therefore is the duty of all more exigent. The well-tempered soul does not yield to difficulties, but presses *onward forever* with increased resolution.

And here the question occurs, which is so often pressed in argument or in taunt, *What have we at the North to do with Slavery?* In answer, I might content myself by saying that as members of the human family, bound together by the cords of a common manhood, there is no human wrong to which we can justly be insensible, nor is there any human sorrow which we should not seek to relieve; but I prefer to say, on this occasion, that, as citizens of the United States, anxious for the good name, the repose, and the prosperity of the Republic—that it may be a blessing and not a curse to mankind—there is nothing among all its diversified interests, under the National Constitution, with which, at this moment, we have so much to do; nor is there any thing with regard to which our duties are so irresistibly clear. I do not dwell on the scandal of Slavery in the national capital—of Slavery in the

national territories — of the coast-wise slave-trade on the high seas beneath the national flag, — all of which are outside of State limits, and within the exclusive jurisdiction of Congress, where you and I, Sir, and every freeman of the North, are compelled to share the responsibility and help to bind the chain. To dislodge Slavery from these usurped footholds under the Constitution, and thus at once to relieve ourselves from a grievous responsibility, and to begin the great work of emancipation, were an object worthy of an exalted ambition. But before even this can be commenced, there is a great work, more than any other important and urgent, which must be consummated in the domain of national politics, and also here at home in the Free States. The National Government itself must be emancipated, so that it shall no longer wear the yoke of servitude; and Slavery in all its pretensions must be dislodged from its usurped foothold, in the Free States themselves, thus relieving ourselves from a grievous responsibility at our own doors, and emancipating the North. Emancipation, even within the national jurisdiction, can be achieved only through the emancipation of the Free States, accompanied by the complete emancipation of the National Government. Ay, Sir, emancipation at the South can be reached only through the emancipation of the North. And this is my answer to the interrogatory, What have we at the North to do with Slavery?

But the answer may be made yet more irresistible, while, with mingled sorrow and shame, I portray the tyrannical power, which holds us in thralldom. Notwithstanding all its excess of numbers, wealth and intelligence, the North is now the vassal of an OLIGARCHY, whose single inspiration comes from Slavery. According to the official tables of our recent census, the *slave-masters* — men, women, and children all told — are only **THREE HUNDRED AND FORTY SEVEN THOUSAND**; and yet this small company, now dominates over the Republic, determines its national policy, disposes of its offices, and sways all to its absolute will. With a watchfulness that never sleeps, and an activity that never tires — with as many eyes as Argus, and as many arms as Briareus — the **SLAVE OLIGARCHY** asserts its perpetual

and insatiate masterdom; now seizing a broad territory once covered by a time-honored ordinance of Freedom; now threatening to wrest Cuba from Spain by violent war, or hardly less violent purchase; now hankering for another slice of Mexico, merely to find new scope for Slavery; now proposing once more to open the hideous, heaven-defying Slave-trade, and thus to replenish its shambles with human flesh; and now, by the lips of an eminent Senator, asserting an audacious claim to the whole group of the West Indies, whether held by Holland, Spain, France, or England, as "our Southern Islands," while it assails the independence of Hayti, and stretches its treacherous ambition even to the distant valley of the Amazon.

In maintaining its power, the Slave Oligarchy has applied a new test for office, very different from that of Jefferson; "Is he honest? is he capable? is he faithful to the Constitution?" These things are all forgotten now in the controlling question, "Is he faithful to Slavery?" With arrogant ostracism it excludes from every national office all who cannot respond to this test. So complete and irrational has this tyranny become, that, at this moment, while I now speak, could Washington, Jefferson, or Franklin, once more descend from their spheres above, to mingle in our affairs and bless us with their wisdom, not one of them, with his recorded, *unretracted* opinions on Slavery, could receive a nomination for the Presidency from a National Convention of either of the late great political parties; nor, stranger still, could either of these sainted patriots, whose names alone open a perpetual fountain of gratitude in all your hearts, be confirmed by the Senate of the United States for any political function whatever under the National Government—not even for the office of postmaster. What I now say, amidst your natural astonishment, I have more than once uttered from my seat in the Senate, and no man there has made answer, for no man, who has sat in its secret sessions and there learned the test which is practically applied, could make answer; and I ask you to accept this statement as my testimony derived from the experience which has been my lot. Yes, fellow-citizens, had this test prevailed in the earlier days, Washington, — first in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of

his countrymen,—could not have been created Generalissimo of the American forces; Jefferson could not have taken his place on the Committee to draft the Declaration of Independence; and Franklin could not have gone forth to France, with the commission of the infant Republic, to secure the invaluable alliance of that ancient kingdom.

And this giant strength is used with a giant heartlessness. By a cruel enactment, which has no source in the Constitution—which defies justice—which tramples on humanity—and which rebels against God, the Free States are made the hunting-ground for slave and you, and I, and all good citizens, are summoned to join in the loathsome and abhorred work. Your hearts and judgments, swift to feel and to condemn, will not require me to expose here the abomination of the Fugitive Slave Bill or its utter unconstitutionality. Elsewhere I have done this, and never been answered. Nor will you expect that an enactment, so entirely devoid of all just sanction, should be called by the sacred name of *law*. History still repeats the language in which our fathers persevered, when they denounced the last emanation of British tyranny which heralded the revolution, as the Boston Port *Bill*, and I am content with this precedent. I have said that if any man finds in the Gospel any support of Slavery, it is because Slavery is already in himself; so do I now say, if any man finds in the Constitution of our country any support of the Fugitive Slave Bill, it is because that bill is already in himself. One of our ancient masters—Aristotle, I think—tells us that every man has a beast in his bosom; but the Northern citizen, who has the Fugitive Slave Bill there, has worse than a beast—a devil! And yet in this bill—more even than in the ostracism at which you rebel—does the Slave Oligarchy stand confessed; heartless, grasping, tyrannical; careless of humanity, right, or the Constitution; wanting that foundation of justice which is the essential base of every civilized community; stuck together only by confederacy in spoliation; and constituting in itself a *magnum latrocinium*; while it degrades the Free States to the condition of a slave plantation, under the lash of a vulgar, despised and revolting overseer.

Surely, fellow citizens, without hesitation or postponement

you will insist that this Oligarchy shall be overthrown; and here is the foremost among the special duties of the North, now required for the honor of the republic, for our own defence, and in obedience to God. Urging this comprehensible duty, I ought to have hours rather than minutes before me; but, in a few words, you shall see its comprehensive importance. Prostrate the Slave Oligarchy—and the wickedness of the Fugitive Slave Bill will be expelled from the statute book. Prostrate the slave Oligarchy—and Slavery will cease at once in the national capital. Prostrate the Slave Oligarchy—and liberty will become the universal law of all the national territories. Prostrate the Slave Oligarchy—and the Slave-trade will no longer skulk along our coasts, beneath the national flag. Prostrate the Slave Oligarchy—and the national government will be at length divorced from Slavery. Prostrate the Slave Oligarchy—and the national policy will be exchanged from Slavery to Freedom. Prostrate the Slave Oligarchy—and the North will no longer be the vassal of the South. Prostrate the Slave Oligarchy—and the North will be admitted to its just share in the trusts and honors of the Republic. Prostrate the Slave Oligarchy—and you will possess the master-key to unlock the whole house of Slavery. Prostrate the Slave Oligarchy—and the gates of emancipation will be open at the South.

But, without waiting for this consummation, there is another special duty to be done here at home, on our own soil, which must be made free in reality, as in name. And here I shall speak frankly, though not without a proper sense of the responsibility of my words. I know that I cannot address you entirely as a private citizen; but I shall say nothing here, which I have not said elsewhere, and which, I shall not be proud to vindicate everywhere. “A lie,” it has been declared, “should be trampled out and extinguished forever,” and surely you will do nothing less with a tyrannical and wicked enactment. The Fugitive Slave Bill, while it continues unrepealed, must be made a dead letter; not by violence; not by any unconstitutional activity or intervention; not even by hasty conflict between jurisdictions; but by an aroused Public Opinion, which, in its irresistible might, shall blast with contempt, indignation and abhorrence, all who consent to be its agents.

Thus did our fathers blast all who became the agents of the Stamp Act; and surely their motive was small compared with ours. The Slave Hunter who drags his victim from Africa is loathed as a monster; but I defy any acuteness of reason to indicate the moral difference between his act and that of the Slave Hunter who drags his victim from our Northern free soil. A few puny persons, calling themselves the Congress of the United States, with the titles of Representatives and Senators, cannot turn wrong into right—cannot change a man into a thing—cannot reverse the irreversible law of God—cannot make him wicked who hunts a slave on the burning sands of Congo or Guinea, and make him virtuous who hunts a slave in the colder streets of Boston or New York. Nor can any acuteness of reason distinguish between the bill of sale from the kidnapper, by which the unhappy African was originally transferred in Congo or Guinea, and the certificate of the Commissioner, by which, when once again in Freedom, he was reduced anew to bondage. The acts are kindred, and should share a kindred condemnation.

One man's virtue becomes a standard of excellence for all; and there is now in Boston, a simple citizen, whose example may be a lesson to Commissioners, Marshals, Magistrates; while it fills all with the beauty of a generous act. I refer to Mr. Hayes, who resigned his place in the city police rather than take any part in the pack of the Slave Hunter. He is now the door-keeper of the public edifice which has been honored this winter by the triumphant lectures on slavery. Better be a door-keeper in the house of the Lord than a dweller in the tents of the ungodly. For myself, let me say, that I can imagine no office, no salary, no consideration, which I would not gladly forego, rather than become in any way an agent for the enslavement of my brother-man. Where, for me, would be comfort or solace after such a work! In dreams and in waking hours, in solitude and in the street, in the study of the open book and in conversation with the world,—wherever I turned, there my victim would stare me in the face; while from the distant rice-fields and sugar plantations of the South, his cries beneath the vindictive lash, his moans at the thought of liberty once his, now, alas! ravished away,

would pursue me, repeating the tale of his fearful doom, and sounding—forever sounding—in my ears, “Thou art the man.” Mr. President, may no such terrible voice fall on your soul or mine !

Yes, Sir, here our duty is plain and paramount. While the Slave Oligarchy, through its unrepealed Slave Bill, undertakes to enslave our free soil, we can only turn for protection to a Public Opinion, worthy of a humane, just and religious people, which shall keep perpetual guard over the liberties of all within our borders ; nay more, which, like the flaming sword of the cherubim at the gates of Paradise, turning on every side, shall prevent any Slave Hunter from ever setting foot on our sacred soil. Elsewhere he may pursue his human prey ; he may employ his congenial blood-hounds, and exult in his successful game. But into these domains of Freedom he must not come. And this Public Opinion, with Freedom as its watch-word, must proclaim not only the overthrow of the Slave Bill, but also the overthrow of the Slave Oligarchy behind,—the two pressing duties of the North, essential to our own emancipation ; and believe me, Sir, while they remain undone, nothing is done.

Mr. President, far already have I trespassed upon your generous patience ; but there are other things which still press for utterance. Something would I say of the arguments by which our Enterprise is commended ; something also of the appeal it makes to men of every condition ; and something also of union, as a vital necessity among all who love Freedom.

I know not if our work can be soon accomplished. I know not, Sir, if you or I can live to see in our Republic the vows of the Fathers at length fulfilled, as the last fetter falls from the limbs of the last slave. But one thing I do know, beyond all doubt or question, that this Enterprise must go on—that in its irresistible current, it will sweep schools, colleges, churches, the intelligence, the conscience, and the religious aspirations of the land, while all, who stand in its way or speak evil of it, are laying up for their children, if not for

themselves, days of sorrow and shame. Better to strive in this cause, even unsuccessfully, than never to strive at all.

There is no weapon in the celestial armory of truth; there is no sweet influence from the skies; there is no generous word that ever dropped from human lips, which may not be employed. Ours, too, is the argument alike of the Conservative and the Reformer, for our cause stands on the truest conservatism and the truest reform. It seeks the conservation of Freedom itself and of its kindred historic principles; it seeks also the reform of Slavery and of kindred tyranny by which it is upheld. Religion, morals, justice, economy, the Constitution, may each and all be invoked; and one person is touched by one argument, while another person is touched by another. You do not forget how Christopher Columbus won Isabella of Spain, to his enterprise of discovery. He first presented to her the temptation of extending her dominions; but she hearkened not. He next promised to her the dazzling wealth of the Indies; and still she hearkened not. But when at last was pictured to her pious imagination the poor heathen with souls to be saved, then the youthful Queen poured her royal jewels into the lap of the Genoese adventurer, and at her expense, that small fleet was sent forth, which gave to Spain and to mankind a New World.

As in this Enterprise, there is a place for every argument, so also is there a place for every man. Even as on the broad shield of Achilles, sculptured by divine art, was wrought every form of human activity; so in this cause, which is the very shield of Freedom, whatever man can do by deed or speech, may find its place. One may act in one way, and another in another way; but all must act. Providence is felt through individuals; the dropping of water wears away the rock; and no man can be so humble or poor as to be excused from this work, while to all the happy in genius, fortune or fame, it makes a special appeal. Here is room for the strength of Luther, and the sweetness of Melancthon; for the wisdom of age, and the ardor of youth; for the judgment of the statesman, and the eloquence of the orator; for the grace of the scholar, and the aspiration of the poet; for the learning of the professor, and the skill of the lawyer; for the exhortation of the preacher, and the per-

suasion of the press; for the various energy of the citizen, and the abounding sympathy of woman.

And still one thing more is needed, without which Liberty-loving men, and even their arguments, will fail in power—even as without charity all graces of knowledge, speech, and faith are said to profit nothing. I mean that *Unity of Spirit*—in itself a fountain of strength—which, filling the people of the North, shall make them tread under foot past antipathies, decayed dissensions, and those irritating names which now exist only as the tattered ensigns of ancient strife. It is right to be taught by the enemy; and with their example before us and their power brandished in our very faces, we cannot hesitate. With them Slavery is made the main-spring of political life, and the absorbing centre of political activity; with them all differences are swallowed up by this *one idea*, as all other rods were swallowed up by the rod of Aaron; with them all unite to keep the national government under the control of slave-masters; and surely we should not do less for Freedom than they do for Slavery. *We too must be united.* Among us at last mutual criticism, crimination, and feud, must give place to mutual sympathy, trust and alliance. Face to face against the SLAVE OLIGARCHY must be rallied the UNITED MASSES of the North, in compact political association—planted on the everlasting base of justice—knit together by the instincts of a common danger, and by the holy sympathies of humanity—enkindled by a love of Freedom, not only for themselves, but for others—determined to enfranchise the national government from degrading thralldom—and constituting the BACK-BONE PARTY, powerful in numbers, wealth, and intelligence, but more powerful still in an inspiring cause. Let this be done, and victory will be ours.